

The Pokagon Chieftain

Newsletter of Civilian Conservation Corps, Company 556

Celebrating the rich history of Pokagon State Park!



Annual Open House/Reunion – July 31, 2011

(About this Cover: The artwork on this cover first appeared on a **Pokagon Chieftain**, Company 556's regular newsletter, in the 1930's. The artist was Walter Crowl, a CCC enrollee and member of Company 556. During his years of CCC service, he produced many works of art that helped the **Chieftain** stay in the "4-star rating group" constantly. This artwork returned as a cover to the annual newsletter in 1983 (the 50th anniversary of the CCC and the 30th anniversary of the Company 556 Reunion) and has remained in use for this newsletter ever since. The tradition continues.)

Pokagon State Park

Civilian Conservation Corps, Company 556

Annual Open House/Reunion – Year number 58!

Sunday, July 31, 2011

Greetings CCC Veterans, Veterans’ Spouses, Families, Friends, and Others interested in Company 556 of the CCC and the history of Pokagon State Park!


Company 556 of the CCC was stationed at Pokagon State Park from 1934 to 1942. The “boys who built Pokagon” later gathered at Pokagon every year on the last Sunday of July for an annual reunion. Following the 50th reunion, the Golden Anniversary of the gathering in 2003, it was thought to be the last. We at Pokagon would not hear of ending what is believed to be the longest running reunion of CCC veterans in the country. We maintain the tradition and again invite you all to the Pokagon State Park Nature Center for a reunion and open house. We open our doors to not only you, but to others from the general public to come and learn about the great and hard work that was done, the memories that were made, and the good times that were had by the “boys” who were here in the CCC. Each year we learn new things about the CCC, and CCC vets continue to bring us artifacts, photos, and memories to add to our archives and knowledge of this great time in our park’s history.

As tradition of the annual reunion holds, the “coffee pot will be on.” We will have photo albums and some CCC memorabilia for viewing. Some veterans may be on hand and no doubt will share a story or two with just a little, gentle prodding. Some may even be true! **Please remember the group photo at 10:45am!**

If the CCC veteran in your life is no longer with us, please join us anyway for a look at the old photos, a chance to listen to a few good stories, for a viewing of the slideshow, a stroll out to the CCC camp area... or just a cup of coffee. All events take place in the Nature Center Auditorium. We hope you can join us!

Fred Wooley, Park Interpreter
Pokagon State Park

Open House Schedule:

9:00am to 11:30am	Visit and view photo albums, artifacts and memorabilia from the CCC days. As always, the coffee pot will be on!	
10:30am	Welcome comments by Fred Wooley. Door prizes and presentations.	
10:45am	Introduction of CCC Veterans. Group photos (veterans and veterans’ spouses and special friends, please be here for the group photo – it’s tradition!)	
11:15am	Slide presentation: “Images from the CCC Camp.” Followed by a walk through the area where the camp stood.	
Afternoon	Lunch on your own, picnic in the park, buffet at the Inn, or head home. More viewing of albums and artifacts.	

CCC Veterans from 2010 Reunion (not pictured: Harold Boocher)

Since 1998, part of our reunion open house included a short, guided walk over the nearby grounds where the CCC camp stood and our veterans lived during their time in Company 556 of the CCC. We are taking steps this year to more permanently mark the sites of the buildings and pathways. We used a civil engineering class from nearby Trine University this winter and spring to relocate the building positions and we will soon get permanent signs to place at each one. If not done this summer, watch for the work to be completed later this year and for sure by the time of the 2012 open house! We continue our work to recognize the great contributions of the Pokagon CCC, Company 556.



Park and Potawatomi Inn information is enclosed if you would like to spend the night here. For further information, please contact Park Interpreter, Fred Wooley, at 260-833-2012, or fwooley@dnr.IN.gov.

CCC Veterans: For free admission to the park for this event, please show this newsletter at the Main Gate.